Center mourns the loss of Astronaut Patty Robertson

NASA Astronaut Patricia Hilliard Robertson died Thursday, May 24, as a result of injuries obtained in the crash of a private plane on the afternoon of May 22. She was 37.

Robertson was a member of the Astronaut Class of 1998 and was assigned as a Crew Support Astronaut for the Expedition Two crew presently on board the International Space Station. In that role, she served as an interface between the Mission Control Center Flight Control Team and the Astronaut Office on issues related to the Expedition Two crew and, along with other astronauts, coordinated activities on the ground for the three crewmembers in space.

When the Expedition Two crew was told of Robertson's passing, they were deeply saddened. While they were offered some time off from their daily schedule, the crew chose to honor Robertson by continuing their work in space.

In 1995 Robertson was one of two fellows selected to study aerospace medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), Galveston, and at JSC. While enrolled as a Space Medicine Fellow, Robertson completed a research project where she studied eccentric and concentric resistive exercise countermeasures for space flight. Robertson also served as a member of the faculty at UTMB in the Departments of Family Medicine and Emergency Medicine.

In 1997, she joined the Flight Medicine Clinic at JSC, where she provided health care for astronauts and their families, and served as Chairman of the Bone, Muscle and Exercise Integrated Product Team.

She was a multiengine rated flight instructor and avid aerobatic pilot. She had accumulated over 1,500 hours of flight time.

Selected by NASA as an Astronaut in June 1998, Robertson reported for training in August 1998. Her technical assignments included serving as the office representative for the Crew Healthcare System (CHeCS), and as Crew Support Astronaut (CSA) for the ISS Expedition Two Crew.

Flags at JSC were flown at half-staff May 25 in her honor and a memorial service was held at Ellington Field on May 29. ■

NASA JSC 2001e17808 photo by David DeHoyos

NASA JSC 99e00996 photo by David DeHoyos

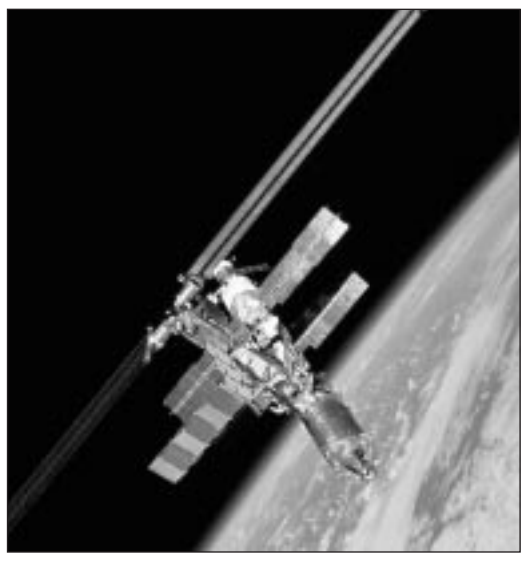
Astronaut Patricia Hilliard Robertson, pictured here, died May 24 as a result of injuries obtained in a private plane crash. Above are items special to Robertson that were displayed at her memorial service at Ellington.

NASA JSC 98-15782

Seventh-grade students in the Clear Creek School District's Science Magnet Program at Seabrook Intermediate School are shown with the Solar Go-Cart they designed and built as part of their Future Think science elective class. JSC Engineer Mike Ewert and Science Department Head Sally Muir, along with the students and other NASA engineers, spent two weeks designing and six weeks building the cart. This partnership is in its second year and is one of many that the Science Magnet Program and CCISD enjoy with JSC.

Did You Know?

The International Space Station is orbiting at 250 miles above Earth.



EXPERIMENT CORNER

Expedition II Science Experiments

CGBA - Commercial Generic Bioprocessing Apparatus Express Rack 1

Help researchers understand why and how microgravity might increase the production of antibiotics. The data could be used to develop better antibiotics here on Earth, as well as increase their production. Delivered during STS-100/6A in April 2001. Flown on 18 shuttle flights and twice on Mir.

More CGBA info:
Expedition Two press kit, p. 11

EarthKAM - Earth Knowledge Acquired by Middle Schools

Destiny Lab enables students in grades six through eight to take photos of the Earth via a remotely controlled camera mounted on a window of the space station. Delivered to the station during STS-98/5A in January 2001.

More EarthKam info:
http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/station/science/experiments/earthkam.html

CPCG - Commercial Protein Crystal Growth - Express Rack 1

Uses the microgravity environment aboard the space station to grow large, high-quality protein crystals that will be returned to Earth for study. Researchers believe these crystals will help them learn more about various diseases and how to best treat them. Delivered during STS-100/6A in April 2001.

More CPCG info:
http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/station/science/experiments/cpcgh.html

DOSMAP - Dosimetric Mapping - ISS

Consists of four different types of radiation detectors located throughout the station that measure the amounts and types of radiation that enter the ISS. The data will be used to develop countermeasures to protect astronauts on future long duration missions. Delivered during STS-102/5A.1 in March 2001. One of three radiation experiments being flown on ISS during Expedition Two. Also flown on 10 previous shuttle flights.

More DOSMAP info:
Expedition Two press kit, p. 14
http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/station/science/experiments/dosmap.html

EXPPCS - Physics of Colloids in Space - Express Rack 2

Colloids are fine particles suspended in a fluid - paint, milk and ink are three examples. Researchers are studying how colloids form in space to better understand their physical structures and use that information for the manufacture of new materials and products. Delivered during STS-100/6A in April 2001. Precursor experiments flown on Mir and shuttle.

More EXPPCS info:
Expedition Two press kit, p. 19

For more details, please read the Expedition Two press kit at:
http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/station/crew/exp2/exp2_presskit.pdf